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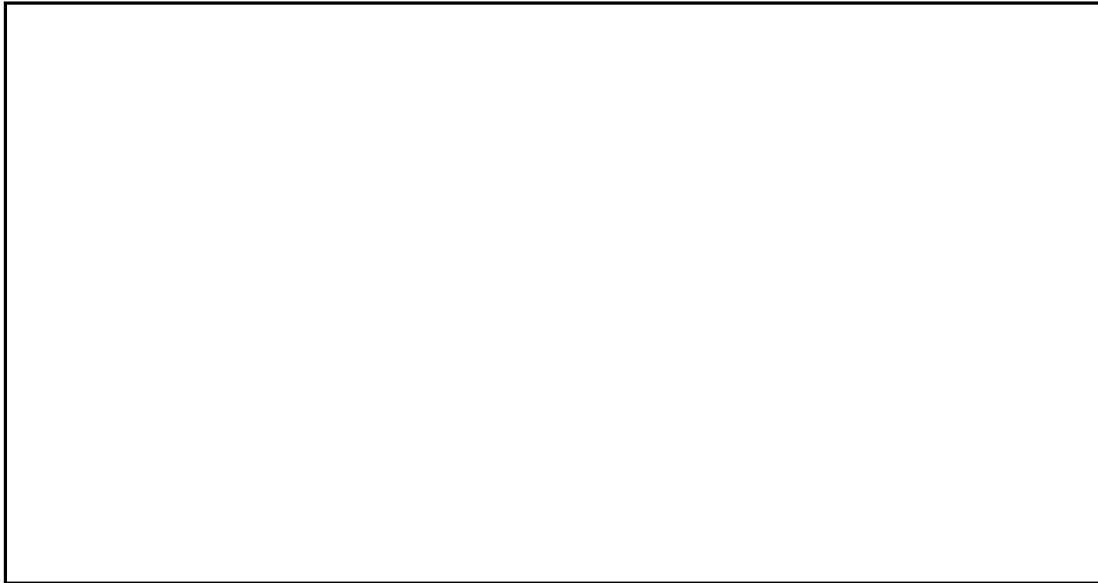
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Israeli Exclusion Issue Continues to Trouble
UNESCO 5

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Israeli Exclusion Issue Continues to Trouble
UNESCO

Little progress is likely to be made toward improving Israel's relations with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) when the executive board of that organization meets next week. Both the Israelis and the UNESCO leadership are opposing moves--primarily undertaken by the US--to integrate Israel into a UNESCO regional group and thus overturn last year's decision by the general conference to exclude Israel from regional group membership.

Despite previous indications that he would support Israel's attendance at an October European regional group meeting, UNESCO's Director General recently reversed this commitment and said that he will not invite Israel to attend the meeting. The Director-General--a Senegalese Moslem--argued that Israel has shown no signs of increasing its cooperation with his organization. The Director also stated that it was largely due to his influence that the Israeli expulsion resolution was moderated at the OAU Kampala meeting, and he considers this a much more significant accomplishment.

The Israelis, on the other hand, have indicated their opposition to any moves to integrate them into the European group through a resolution of the executive board. They fear that their admission through this back door method will lessen US and European pressure on next year's general conference to reverse its earlier decision. Moreover, they argue that even if the executive board recommends Israel's membership, next year's conference is not bound to follow this recommendation.

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The Israelis, in asking the Belgians last week not to introduce any resolution seeking to admit Israel to the European group, showed concern that the US Congress might seize on a favorable decision, for instance, as evidence of progress toward a solution of the problem sufficient to warrant lifting the Congressional restriction of US contributions. The Israelis feel that what is happening to UNESCO because of its financial plight serves as a warning to other UN bodies against adopting such measures.

The continuing stalemate on this issue raises doubts about the UN agency's future. The expulsion issue has led the US Congress to suspend the US' annual contribution, which provides for about 25 percent of UNESCO's budget, and the Arab states who mounted the anti-Israel campaign last year have not come through with sufficient loans to make up for UNESCO's deficit. Some UNESCO officials are now discussing an extra-ordinary session of the general conference to try to solve the problem.

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